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	VERIFICATION NO.:	Area Code	Number			
		415				
DATE		4/15/92				
# OF PAGES		(Including Cover) 5				
SUBJECT		United Hackett				
NOTE		Re our conversation				
		This am				
		1/12				

Sudden DDT site cleanup stirs up ire

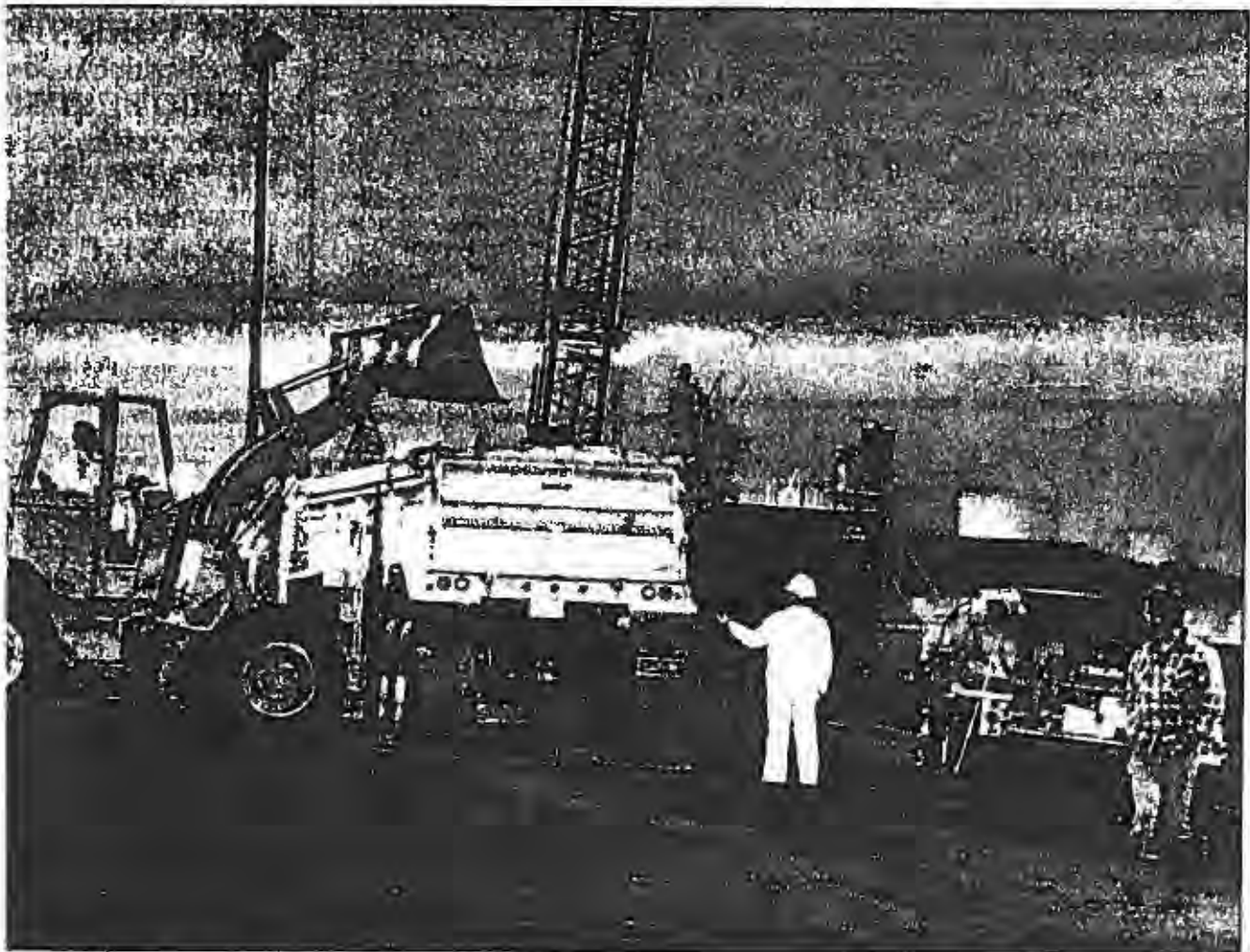
By Jacqueline Ginley
Staff writer

RICHMOND — A toxic cleanup crew in white suits and protective face masks has been rolling in and out of the Richmond waterfront in the middle of the night, leaving behind anxious residents who say they deserve to know more about what's happening in their neighborhood than what city or federal officials are telling them.

"You say toxics are going to be removed from your community, and that's a problem that a lot of people are going to be concerned with," Linda Jackson said of the pesticide cleanup at Richmond's Inner Harbor. "It bothers me that they (Environmental Protection Agency) couldn't present this to the community."

By dawn on Sunday, the cleanup crews plan to have removed about 2,500 tons of toxic soil from United Heckathorn, a former DDT factory listed among the nation's most polluted areas.

Five of the dozen companies believed to have had a hand in the Heckathorn site struck an agreement with EPA last week to pay \$1 million for removing three of the tarp-covered piles of toxic dirt from the site, an EPA official said Tuesday.



WS clean the United Heckathorn site of toxic soil Tuesday.

Times/Bob Sibila

Please see **CLEANUP**, back page

river



Juveniles say execution isn't answer

By Rocky Rushing
Staff writer

MARTINEZ — Although they don't know much about him, teen-agers at Juvenile Hall on Tuesday said the execution of Robert Alton Harris would be murder.

"They don't want us to kill someone, but they are turning around and doing the same thing," said Kilwon, one of five wards interviewed at Juvenile Hall's Night Unit.



ROBERT ALTON HARRIS CASE

INSIDE

How other governors in the United States have dealt with clemency requests from inmates awaiting execution.

GA

doubts Harris' execution would have a beneficial effect on young law breakers.

"They know the death penalty is the furthest thing that is going to happen to them," he said.

Teens in custody are not introspective. They tend to think most about not getting caught, Lewis said.

Kilwon, a husky 16-year-old from Pittsburg, is charged with murder. He said he is a member of

Banks in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are not well established so U.S. banks are reluctant to accept their letters of credit, he said.

Varian is selling in some of the

Europe — Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, said Gary Simpson, vice president for marketing at the high-tech company which manufactures scientific instruments in Walnut Creek.

Cleanup

FROM PAGE 1A

"We got a letter from the EPA in March suggesting that we remove it," said Keith Howard, a Walnut Creek attorney representing the landowners. "That's where the timing comes in."

EPA's "suggestion" was fortified with the threat of potential enforcement actions should the companies fail to comply, a tactic rarely used, said John Lyons, an EPA attorney in San Francisco. The soil being hauled to a disposal site in Beatty, Nev., this week contains DDT and other pesticides in concentrations of about 1,000 parts per million, Lyons said.

It is only a small part of the entire cleanup plan, but Lyons said EPA wanted it removed as soon as possible because the concentrations might skew the results of further studies at the site. A final cleanup plan is not expected to be completed until sometime next year, more than 30 years after officials linked a rash of poisoned fish floating in the Lauritzen Channel to overflowing vats of DDT at the site.

The companies that have agreed to pay for this week's work are Ley in Richmond Terminal Corp., which owns the site; Part Industrial Corp., the previous owner; Shefr Oil Co.,

MEETING

What: EPA to discuss United Heckthorn toxic risks

Where: Martin Luther King Community Center, 360 Harbour Way South

When: 6 p.m., April 23

Call: Richmond Planning Department, 620-6706

and two companies that did business with United Heckthorn — Montrose Chemical Corp. and Rhone-Poulenc.

Their decision, first announced to the city on Friday, came as a surprise to some residents of the Santa Fe neighborhood, an economically depressed area downwind from the industrial yard where residents have worried about potential exposure.

DDT, a pesticide banned in this country in 1972, can be fatal if consumed in sufficient quantities. It has been found to cause headaches and other maladies.

"This is hazardous material, and you have a population of people that's in close proximity to the area," said Marcel Jones Jr., one of a handful of people who unsuccessfully petitioned the Richmond City Council Monday night to postpone the cleanup.

The cleanup poses no immediate health risks to downwind neighbors, according to Andy Lincoff, EPA project manager for the site.